



Romans 1-5

THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH

“The just shall live by his faith.” It does not say what part of his life hangs on his believing, or what phase of his life best proves his believing—it comprehends the beginning, continuance, increase and perfecting of spiritual life as being all by faith. Observe that the text means that the moment a man believes he begins to live in the sight of God. He trusts his God; he accepts God’s revelation of Himself; he confides, reposes, leans upon his Savior—and that moment he becomes a spiritually living man, quickened with spiritual life by God the Holy Spirit!

The faith which saves is not one single act done and ended on a certain day—it is an act continued and persevered in throughout the entire life of the man. The just not only commences to live by his faith, but he continues to live by his faith. ...Faith is essential all along every day and all the day, in all things. Our natural life begins by breathing and it must be continued by breathing. What the breath is to the body, that is faith to the soul.

—Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-92)

The first five chapters of Romans teach five UNIVERSAL truths:

1. ALL OF US HAVE SINNED AND HAVE FALLEN SHORT OF THE PERFECT RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

There is none righteous, no, not one (3:10; cf. Ps. 14:3).

- God has revealed His existence, power, and perfection to all people everywhere (1:18-20).
- Humanity, in general, has suppressed, resisted, and rejected the knowledge of God (1:21-23).
- God has given over humanity to the pursuit of its own lusts, resulting in its own condemnation (1:24-32).
- The self-righteous moralist who condemns the sins of others while ignoring his own sin is also condemned (2:1-16).
- The religious person who relies on his outward “goodness” or religious rituals is also condemned (2:17-29).
- All people—regardless of ethnicity, social status, knowledge, or religion—are condemned in their sin (3:1-20).

2. ALL OF US ARE SPIRITUALLY DEAD IN ADAM AND DESERVE ETERNAL DEATH BECAUSE OF OUR SIN.

- Adam is both humanity’s father and representative. Thus, his sin impacted us all with spiritual death (5:12).

This epistle [Romans] is really the chief part of the New Testament and is truly the purest gospel. It is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but also that he should occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul. It can never be read or pondered too much, and the more it is dealt with, the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes. —Martin Luther

The Greek word for “all” (*pas*) occurs 71x in Romans. Paul’s focus is universal in this epistle.

Sin is a word, deed, or desire in opposition to the eternal law of God. —Augustine (354-430)

Sin. Greek, *hamartia*, “to miss the mark.” It is a falling short of God’s standard in thought, word, motivation, desire, or action.

We all know, regardless of what we tell ourselves, that there is a Creator, on whom we are utterly dependent and to whom we are completely accountable.

—Timothy Keller

- Our inherited spiritual death is confirmed by our own corrupted nature, individual sin, and physical death (5:13-21).
- Our two greatest enemies are sin and death. Thus, a true Savior must be able to conquer sin and death and give us life (5:12-21).

3. ALL OF US NEED THE FREE GIFT OF JUSTIFICATION THROUGH THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

- Jesus Christ—the perfect Man and God in the flesh—died on the cross, in our place, as our righteous substitute for sin (3:25; 5:8).
- Jesus Christ, whose blood is of infinite value to atone for all of our sin, fully satisfied the wrath of God against sin (3:25; 5:18).
- Jesus Christ, the One with power over sin and death, is able to set us free from sin and death and give us new life (3:24; 5:17).

4. ALL OF US CAN BE DECLARED RIGHTEOUS BEFORE GOD BY FAITH ALONE IN JESUS CHRIST ALONE.

- Saving faith is putting one's full trust and reliance on Jesus Christ alone for one's salvation from sin and death (3:26).
- Saving faith excludes all self-reliance and boasting in one's own good works or outward obedience to the law (3:21-31).
- Saving faith has always been God's redemptive plan as exhibited in the examples of Abraham and David (4:1-25).

5. ALL THOSE WHO TRUST IN JESUS CHRIST ARE RECONCILED TO GOD AND RECIPIENTS OF THE BLESSINGS OF SALVATION.

- We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (5:1).
- We are surrounded by grace in Jesus Christ (5:2).
- We have real, sustaining hope in Jesus Christ (5:2-5).
- We are saturated with God's love in Jesus Christ (5:5-11).
- We are united with Jesus Christ—spiritually reborn into a new humanity, reigning in life, abounding in grace (5:15-21).

The OT and Judaism are characterized by a far stronger sense of corporate solidarity than is true in modern Western culture... And Paul's presentation of salvation history manifestly depends on such corporate categories, particularly in his setting forth Adam and Christ as "inclusive" persons, those whose actions are determinative for all who belong to them, or who are "in" them.

—Douglas Moo

Justification is the act of God whereby He declares the believing sinner righteous in Christ on the basis of the finished work of Christ on the cross.

—Warren Wiersbe

Believe. Hebrew, *aman*, "to trust, believe in, stand firm in." Greek, *pisteuo*, "to be persuaded of, to place confidence in, trust."

*When, by the Spirit of God, I understood these words—"the just shall live by faith," "the just shall live **by faith!**"—then I felt born again like a new man; I entered through the open doors into the very Paradise of God!*

—Martin Luther

Faith is helplessness reaching out in total dependence upon God.

—Robert H. Mounce

Faith strips us of all arrogance and leads us naked and needy to God, that we may seek salvation from him alone. —John Calvin

Nothing therefore should give greater joy to all God's people than to meditate upon this love of Christ. Indeed, our chief defect as Christians is that we fail to realize Christ's love to us.

—D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones